

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 SP-02 AID-05

EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

PA-01 PRS-01 CU-02 ACDA-05 /120 W

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R 181518Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2957

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, GW, IS

SUBJECT: DGB AND HISTADRUT PROMISE CLOSER RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: DURING A VISIT TO THE DGB HEADQUARTERS IN DUESSELDORF, A DELEGATION FROM THE ISRAELI TRADE UNION FEDERATION, HISTADRUT, WELCOMED THE LATEST SINAI AGREEMENT, ASKED THE GERMANS TO HELP THEM ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH EGYPTIAN TRADE UNIONISTS AND SIGNED A FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT PROMISING CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DGB AND THE ISRAELI TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. A DELEGATION FROM THE ISRAELI TRADE UNION FEDERATION, HISTADRUT, LED BY ITS SECRETARY GENERAL, YERUCHAM MESHEL, VISITED THE FRG FROM AUGUST 29 THRU SEPTEMBER 4 AS GUESTS OF THE GERMAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (DGB). THE HISTADRUT AGENDA INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH LEADING WEST GERMAN POLITICAL FIGURES INCLUDING CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, SPD CHAIRMAN BRANDT, PRESIDENT OF THE BUNDESTAG RENGEL, AND THE MINISTER PRESIDENT OF NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA KUEHN. THE ISRAELIS WERE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN MANPOWER POLICY, CODETERMINATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION REFORM, TECHNIQUES OF COMBATING INFLATION AND TAX REFORM IN THE FRG.

3. AT THE DGB HEADQUARTERS, MESHEL ADDRESSED THE DGB EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. (DGB SOURCES CLAIM HE WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE FIRST FOREIGN TRADE UNION LEADER TO ADDRESS THIS COUNCIL.) HE WELCOMED THE NEW SINAI AGREEMENT, SAYING THE AGREEMENT IS WORTH THE RISK IT INVOLVES AND THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS WOULD AGREE. HE SAID THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN AGENCIES OF THE ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS OF BOTH COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY

THE TRADE UNIONS, AND ASKED THE DGB TO HELP THE ISRAELIS TO INITIATE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EGYPTIAN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

4. THE ISRAELI AND GERMAN TRADE UNIONISTS ALSO SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WHICH, IN ADDITION TO CREDITING PREVIOUS CONTACT BETWEEN THE HISTADRUT AND THE DGB WITH PLAYING A DECISIVE ROLE IN HELPING THE CITIZENS OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO OVERCOME THE BURDENS OF THE PAST, PROMISED TO CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING CONTACTS BETWEEN THEIR RESPECTIVE REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND AFFILIATED UNIONS. AS PART OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AGREEMENT, MESHEL ALSO SIGNED A TRADE UNION WORKER EDUCATION AGREEMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION, ALFRED NAU.

5. THE DGB GAVE EXTRAORDINARY PRESS COVERAGE TO THE VISIT IN "WELT DER ARBEIT" AND IN OTHER MEDIA. LATER, WHEN DGB PRESIDENT VETTER WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THIS NEW AGREEMENT, HE COMMENTED THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD NOT LEAD TO A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS BECAUSE "ISRAEL IS NOT JUST AROUND THE CORNER", CAUSING THE ISRAELI LABOR ATTACHE IN BONN TO COMMENT THAT

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VETTER WAS PROBABLY TRYING TO AVOID BEING TOO CLOSELY
IDENTIFIED WITH THE ISRAELIS. A LEADING DGB EDITORIA-
LIST OPINED LATER THAT ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE
IF THE DGB COULD HELP THE HISTADRUT AND THE ARABS
ESTABLISH CONTACTS, HE WAS NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC.

6. COMMENT: MESHEL'S VISIT AND THE ABOVE AGREEMENTS

FOLLOW NUMEROUS VISITS OF TOP DGB AND AFFILIATED UNION LEADERS TO ISRAEL DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS. DGB PRESIDENT VETTER HAS VISITED ISRAEL TWICE, AND NEARLY ALL MEMBERS OF THE DGB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE PRESIDENTS OF THE DGB INDUSTRIAL UNIONS HAVE VISITED ISRAEL DURING THIS PERIOD. THE ONLY DGB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, MARTIN HEISS, WHO HAS NOT PARTICIPATED IN THIS EXCHANGE PROGRAM, IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT ISRAEL IN FEBRUARY 1976.

7. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE DGB WILL MOVE CAUTIOUSLY TO EXPAND ITS CONTACTS WITH EGYPTIAN AND OTHER ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. IN THE PAST THE DGB WAS RELUCTANT TO DEVELOP SUCH CONTACTS, BECAUSE THEY FEARED THE ISRAELIS MIGHT MISUNDERSTAND. IN ADDITION TO THE HISTADRUT REQUEST THAT THE DGB SERVE AS A GO-BETWEEN, SEVERAL OTHER DEVELOPMENTS MAY MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE DGB TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE EGYPTIAN TRADE UNIONISTS. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO GERHARD SCHMIDT, A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEMBER OF THE DGB EXECUTIVE BOARD, DISCUSSED DGB-EGYPTIAN CONTACTS WITH HISTADRUT OFFICIALS WHILE VISITING ISRAEL. LATER HE DECIDED TO MAKE A PERSONAL TRIP IN EGYPT. AT FIRST THE EGYPTIANS REFUSED TO GRANT HIM A VISA BECAUSE HE HAD AN ISRAELI VISA IN HIS PASSPORT. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING INTERVENTION BY THE FRG MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE EGYPTIANS GRANTED SCHMIDT A VISA AND GAVE HIM AN OFFICIAL WELCOME, WHICH LED TO NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT AND LABOR LEADERS. SCHMIDT TOLD THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE THAT HE FEELS THAT THE CURRENT CLIMATE IN EGYPT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE GERMANS TO TRY TO ARRANGE CONTACTS BETWEEN THE HISTADRUT AND EGYPTIAN LABOR LEADERS. THE FACT THAT THE DGB REPRESENTATIVE IN THE ILO, GERD MUHR, SUPPORTED THE ELECTION OF AN EGYPTIAN WORKER MEMBER TO THE ILO GOVERNING BODY SHOULD AT LEAST MAKE IT EASIER FOR EGYPTIAN AND GERMAN TRADE UNIONISTS TO EXPAND RELATIONS.

8. THE DGB LEADERS, WHO ARE COOPERATING CLOSELY WITH THE AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE, IRVING BROWN, IN AN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN THE TRIPARTITE CHARACTER OF THE ILO AND TO PREVENT ITS EXPLOITATION BY THE PLO, WELCOMED MESHEL'S STATEMENT THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO THE AFL-CIO IN OCTOBER, HE WILL ENCOURAGE US TRADE UNIONISTS TO CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE ILO. HILLENBRAND

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